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The Visionary and Other Poems

Christina [illegible]

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THE VISIONARY

and

Other Poems

By Christine Siebeneck Swayne

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1905

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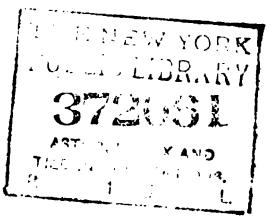

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THE VISIONARY

And Other Poems

THE VISIONARY

A Portrait

Within his blue, brave eyes the fire of hope
Lights younger men the way to deathless death;
Upon his aged lips immortal song,
Exults to thrill and fill the ear of youth,
While from that slackening heart his fruitful faith
Sows all the world he loved, as one huge field,
With seed of mighty harvesting to come.

When he was young the freedom of his blood
Drove him from out the populous, pent herds,
Who multiply within those ghettos of the soul,
Those cramping bounds, Expedience and Use; —
Then with inspired, uncalculating joy
He rioted among traditions of the great,
Made models of the liberated dead:
He saw his life a road to other worlds,
And scorned to shape a mercenary course;
Coined gain or loss he never paused to weigh,
But showed a glad uncompromising front,
Betraying utter blindness to a bribe,
And his dire inability to lie:
He sought the fiercest battles of his life
With no pre-cognant, careful thought of self:
He never left a harnessed foe unhacked,
A wrong unharried in its ancient hold,
Or long-armed sin to sow in dragons-teeth
The furrows whence a mailed host should spring.
"Awake! arise! advance!" his constant cry:
He poured himself like water for a cause,
He spent himself like treasure for a hope —
Still, when he feared his last reserve was gone,
There rose a new resourcefulness within

To daunt who made his feebleness his snare: —
And ever and again when all seemed lost,
His hopes confounded and his trust betrayed,
When dreadful doubt destroyed the weak in faith,
When fear clung, throttling, at the strongest throat,
When mere adherence to his scourging creed
Provoked the wrath of Mammon in his might,
That visionary face stood out stern eyed
Against the terrors of the risen storm;
His hand was often raised in lone assault
Upon the strongholds of corrupted power: —
Again, again, and shamefully again,
The weaklings fled, deserting him from fear,
And left him, bounden, mid envenomed foes;
But ever from his exile and defeat
He came returning to the same attack,
While those who fled, recaptured by his spell,
Found him, as ever, willing to believe
They would be staunch upholders of his hands,
And equal champions of the outraged Right.

Ten thousand cares have pulled that knotted brow,
And scoured deep the wrinkles in his cheek,
While sorrows powerful, beyond power to count,
Have drawn the lips to that straight, suffering line;
Sure signs betray, about the hopeful eyes,
The loss of over-taxed power to weep:
This is the meed of his long, dauntless life,
This face that shows the scars of all his years;
And yet with his out-wearied heart within,
That eager ring of grisly foes without,
Behold him! with his high-veined aged hands
Uphold the standard that he raised in youth
And lift his metal-clear, stentorian voice
Crying on men to follow to the fight!

THE GOAL OF DREAMS

I know an isle that very truly seems
To me the Goal of Dreams.

Afar may swaying masthead lookout hear
The surf that sings of fear;

Anigh the water wearied eye may reach
Green palms upon the beach;

See scar'd and weathered ridges greatly rise,
Mere mounds beneath vast skies;

While, mountains massing over mountain height,
Lie clouds, in morning light; —

There weary seamen gorges have espied
Where little homes might hide,

Where, ceaseless, thro' the silent summer days
The scented zephyr plays

Through fronding fern and feathery fairy vine
That clothe the rock incline:

The whiff of Eden barely may compare,
To that sweet laden air:

There errant fancy, long content to roam,
Might bide, and be at home.

Or strong winged dreamer, winning to the shore,
Might dwell forevermore.

THE THIN VEIL

How shall I speak of facts beyond all phrasing?
  How can I word things utterly unknown;
That unbeheld by any eager gazing,
  All unexplained, unheeded, and unknown?

Have we not all stretched hands of dreadful groping,
  Blindly inquiring where the road might lead,
Sick, to the ford have felt the pathway sloping,
  Greatly despaired of guidance in our need?

Who has not cried for kindly comprehension,
  Sending from out his loneliness a wail;
Bracing his powers for their intensest tension,
  Fearing his soul would pass beyond the pale?

Who has not known, in blackness of some midnight,
  Strangely awakened, how his whole soul quailed,
Seeing there lay within the dark some hid light,
  Feeling the blindness of his eyes had failed?

Have we not all in times of wrung emotion
  Known that One, absent, to our aid has come,
Potent through supersensual devotion,
  Bearing a message tho' his love were dumb?

He who has felt this formless fierce desiring,
  He who is eager, urgent for the goal,
Whose one request is Answer to inquiring,
  Knows that the veil is thin before his soul.

DAWN

From the west the night winds blow,
And the clouds are driven far,
In the sky the moon is low,
Very pale is every star:
While the zephyrs sigh,
And the morn is nigh
When the golden sun will rise on high.

O'er the world the air is still,
All the life is in the sky.
Slowly dawning colors thrill,
And the pulse of light beats high:
Waking birds do cheep,
Downy nestlings peep,
Forest folk are waking from their sleep.

In the vale the wood lies dim,
Early dawn is on the hill;
Now the sun bursts o'er its rim,
Rising ever higher still,
Till the day is bright,
Floating clouds are white,
And the heaven is full of glorious light.

THE NEW HOPE.

That fragile ship, my Joy, has come to grief,
  Wrecked when her voyage promised very fair.
Yes, rent and shattered past my first belief,
  Oh! split and splintered far beyond repair.

Come! let me build and launch another boat,
  To send her where my first adventure failed,
Yes, thrust her in the very tempest's throat,
  The bravest vessel that has ever sailed.

THE COMING LETTER

Somewhere a letter waits for me tonight,
  Where alien hands have laid it idly by;
Somewhere those few dear pages of delight,
  Unheeded, lone, and all uncared for lie.
I scarce can think they would not know its mark,
  E'en strangers, surely, must its worth espy:
From all that glowing love one upward spark
  Must reach and teach the cold official eye:
Can what he says, and what I parch to hear,
  Can such a joy concealed, unknown remain?
I think that with his letter lying near,
  Ascetic hearts some warmth of love must gain:
Therefore at this delay I may not sorrow,
  But, smiling think, " his letter comes tomorrow! "

LOVE THE GOLDSMITH

Out of his treasure of unending days
  Time offered us a precious golden few;
But these we wasted soon in pretty plays,
  Then begged that Time his largess would renew,
Rich Time, the niggard, spared for us but two,
  Nor bid the sun rise swift, nor slowly set;
While we would fain have stayed the drying dew,
  Or begged the Night to " bide a moment yet "—
Thus as we passed reluctant, I, and he,
  (Each dreading that first farewell we must take),
Saw Love, the goldsmith, sit beneath a tree,
  And begged of him to make us some keepsake,
So these two days of molten glowing hours
  Were deftly worked to golden passion flowers.

" LOVE'S PURVEYORS "

My Eyes and Ears have leagued them with young Love,
  And promised him his purveyors to be,
So they around, about, beneath, above
  Are seeking somewhat sweet to hear or see,
When found it is Love's weapon against me!
  Love has besieged my soul with that and this;
And Love has scaled my heart with thine and thee;
  For watchwords Love has chosen " clasp " and " kiss ";
  To sentries softly whispered " Loving is all bliss ";
Has tempted me with wily-winsome ways;
  Proclaimed by herald " Love you must not miss ";
Offered a kingly bribe of golden days;
  And all the time those traitor Ears and Eyes
  Have furnished him munitions and supplies!

YOU AND I

To an Hawaiian Air

Listen, dear one, listen while the night breeze,
Blows thro' the swaying palm trees
Singing, clear and clearer,
His, who, drawing nearer,
Throws around your sweet knees,
Loving arms that only you appease!

Linger, dear one, tho' the surf be roaring,
Hear but my love imploring:
Love that ne'er abated
While too long it waited.
Now, my hope restoring,
Yield me, Sweet, yourself to my adoring!

A LOVER'S RONDEAU

A clouded moon in summer skies
That arch a lover's paradise,
A moon, half-hid, that shimmers through
White clouds across the midnight blue;
Soft, blurring mist, that, trailing, flies,
To lodge where cloud-drift massing lies,
Where vapor mountains dimly rise,
Each snowy ridge line pointing to
A clouded moon;—
Here eyes gaze deep in thrilling eyes,
And arms reach out on love's emprise
While lips say only "you" and "you"—
On such a night men wed or woo,
While slowly down the heaven dies,
A clouded moon.

THE DREAM OF A KISS

I dreamed I lay within his master arm,
  And that his eyes, adventured into mine,
Had roused my pulses to a glad alarm
  Of love, obeying his imperious sign;
His urgent will supreme, my will supine,
  His mouth most eloquent in mute address,
Demanding that which I could not decline,
  Because my heart said only "yes" and "yes": —
Oh! we forgot the world, and life, and death,
  Because his heart was knocking on my breast,
When I, with faltering lips and flutt'ring breath,
  Yielding, acceded to his keen request, —
At last, transcending words that speak of bliss,
Our two mouths moulded in one God-like Kiss!

KEALAKEKUA BAY

A cliff uptowering, black as night,
  A bay that lies in mystery —
O'ershadowed in the moon's full light —
  Lo! such a "pali" well might be
  The path of gods who sought the sea,
Arriving, flower-crowned, drenched with dew,
  Where godlike music endlessly
The breakers boom, and boom anew.

And such brown gods, so flower bedight,
  So mountain-footed, happily
Might wander, using touch for sight,
  'Mid rocks and sea spray, fearlessly
  In any midnight wander, free
To hear, in this seagirt purlieu,
  Their pæan, mortal threnody
The breakers boom, and boom anew.

Who thinks the gods have vanished quite,
  While sweet-breathed lilies brush the knee,
Beside the cascade foaming white,
  While blows the trade wind tirelessly
  Through groves of curly-coa tree,
Or where, beneath the midnight blue,
  With mighty, reckless, crashing glee
The breakers boom, and boom anew?

ENVOY

Princess! the answer lies with thee,
  Say thou if the old gods be true;
Hark first the ocean's endless plea,
  The breakers boom, and boom anew.

ILLICILLAWAET GLACIER

Here in the early days of this old world
  This ice lay gleaming in the new born sun;
  Whence, now, the grey-green glacier waters run
Long since by youthful wind the snows were
    swirled;
In curve and cave, by primal eddies whirled,
  Drift upon drift, and fleecy ton on ton
  Lay, ere our oldest cities were begun,
Lie, yet, where they in æons past were hurled;
Here in his frozen bed the frozen river lies,
  Close in his icy heart his ancient secret sleeps, —
Around, the world breathes warm beneath spring
    skies,
  And oft a transitory blossom peeps
From leafy shade that yearly buds and dies, —
  Still slothful-paced, his age-old course he keeps.

LAZARUS

He did not tell, because there were no words
  Meaning the things which he did see and hear;
Only his eyes, unto those women twain
  Spake a great love, which cast out every fear.

THE FLET-WITE

Freed from the cell wherein I hid my shame!
  "Respite," "Reprieve," "Release," kindness
    unkind;
How can I live with my dismantled name?
  Dishonor honor win among mankind?

BETWEEN HERE AND THERE

Oh! Here the world is lonely,
And sad, and full of care,
But surely joy and happiness
And merry life are There!

Oh! Here the world is bitter cold,
Frost bound, and bleak with snow,
But There throughout the brilliant days
The balmy south winds blow.

I'd venture forth for happiness
All dangers would I dare,
If I might find the hidden road
That leads from Here to There.

EXQUISITE HANDS

Exquisite hands, how can I sing your grace?
The swift, sweet touch upon my waiting face
Of finger tips that thrilled me through and through,
And then as swift, but bitterly, withdrew,
While I sat, still within the self-same place,
Bewildered at my sorry-joyful case;
Oh! once again that fleeting blessing trace
Across my cheek, grant Heaven to me anew,
Exquisite hands!
My desperate, icy fingers interlace,
As though my prayer could dissipate this space,
Or urge your distant, yearning hands to woo
Mine from their exile; hear me cry to you,
"Oh! come again in loving, long embrace,
Exquisite hands!"

WAIKIKI BEACH

(HONOLULU)

This is the Beach whereon the white foam flies
Beneath the mounting skies;
Where the strong ocean currents pour
From a far northern shore;
Where coral waters, purple, green, and blue,
And every peacock hue,
Glimmer, and gleam, and glint,
A fierier opal tint.

The long seas roll from rocky, ice-girt lands
To these palm-shaded sands.
The little wave that laps about your feet
Has fled from snow and sleet,
Where unbound waters rage, and rave, and roar,
Tossing forevermore,
And now lies on this sun-warmed, southern isle,
Where rich brown faces smile.

Lo! each great roller breaks upon the bar,
Where the slim surf boats are,
Upon this "horse," this wave, this rushing tide,
See the Hawaiians ride,
A laughing, shouting, singing, merry crew,
In their fleet black canoe,
And all are forward-leaning, straining in the wind,
While the curled wave pursues behind —
High overhead beneath the brilliant heaven
Fly clouds forever by a great wind driven.

AN UPRIGHT JUDGE

An upright judge I ever sought to be
Because the fate of many lay with me;
I was not one who sought a life of ease,
Whose cravings luxury alone could please,
Who worked for wealth and winnings eagerly,
Stretched beggar-hands with hard effrontery,
Unlocked my justice with a golden key,
No! Heaven made me, answering my pleas,
An upright judge.
When the Great Judge His world shall publicly
Arraign in Court of Last Appeal, will He
Pronounce me guilty, if, from bended knees,
I answer queries with plain words like these,
" In my heart's core I am, as outwardly,
An upright judge."

A MOONLIT GARDEN

A murmurous moonlit garden,
  A murmuring summer sea,
Not Arcady nor Arden
  Is fairer unto me.

A path of silver shimmer,
  Beset on either hand
By wooded spaces dimmer
  By wavering shadow-land.

A silence filled with stirring
  Of many leaves asleep,
With faint detected whirring
  Of moths that, circling, sweep.

Main of all charms so binding,
  The sound, the shade, the light,
I feel around me winding
  The unnamed scent of night.

DESERTED PLACES

Old temples standing high on bare lone hills;
  Gaunt castles rooted in the living rock;
Prone cities, gateway, rampart, statue, tower
  Laid level by some ancient earthquake shock;

Tall columns raised to heroes long forgot;
  Queens' chambers left to silence and neglect;
Cold altars where priest-litten sacred fires
  Burned once to gods whom all men now reject;

Huge columned fore-court; record monolith;
  Vast pylon, buried in oblivious sand;
Great archways that some Monarch rode beneath
  Returning from an abject, conquered land;

All these I saw and felt their eerie charm,
  And, fleeing, left, to wander far and wide
Among thronged cities — but returned unto
  Deserted places and the ebbing tide.

RONDEL OF HOPE

Spring comes back to our snow-bound dwelling,
  The sweet-breathed Spring that we loved of yore;
  We note, while we bide in the open door,
The vital twig, and the buds' new swelling,
We hear the ripple of free stream telling
  That yet again, as so oft before,
Spring comes back to our snow-bound dwelling,
  The sweet-breathed Spring that we loved of yore.

We see great Nature's force impelling
  All to draw from her living store;
  And we, who doubted, we hope once more,
And say, as we feel love upward welling,
" Spring comes back to our snow-bound dwelling."

SEA FOAM

Airy foam and fairy form
With white moonlight on her breast,
Fairy form and airy foam
Blowing from the topmost crest.

Weaving waves and writhing wraithes
Sliding drop on silver limb,
Writhing wraithes and weaving waves
Scarcely seen by moonlight dim.

Cloudy moon and moonlit cloud
Sailing o'er the fairy forms;
Moonlit cloud and clooded moon
Driven by advancing storms.

FAILURE

Before us spread unhampered easy ways,
And wealth and all men's praise;
Behind us lay the purse-pinched, lonely past,
Unsmirched from first to last, —
Then there befell that fatal one " mistake,"
Which Honor bade us make.

Some men cried out that we had lost our chance;
Some passed without a glance;
Some pitied us for missing fame and ease,
And all that follow these, —
We stood unmoved, set hearts that never quailed,
Glad to have nobly failed.

THE OTHER SHORE

Is there no boat to take our message o'er
Unto the other shore?
To those who wait upon the further sands
We stretch beseeching hands;
In vain our voices call, cry, beg, implore,
Drowned in the Ocean's roar.

Yet what is this, within, that seems to wake?
What effort did we make?
What sense is this, that mercifully expands
To compass our demands?
Can voices speak again that erstwhile spake,
And the long silence break?

DEEP IN THE WOODS

Deep in the woods and deeper you may stray,
And listen to the wood-doves cooing low,
And half forget the sultry summer day,
The cornfields shining-bladed row on row,
The road where creaking, creeping ox-carts go;—
The while your willing feet will press a shaded way
Deep in the woods and deeper you may stray,
And listen to the wood-doves cooing low,
Or watch the strong, wild grape vine slowly sway
While little fitful breezes die, or blow, —
Where some old log lies, fallen, hollow, gray,
Soft moss will creep, and graven-lichen grow,
Deep in the woods and deeper you may stray
And listen to the wood-doves cooing low.

QUAKER MEETING

With folded hands laid down upon my knee,
I bide, nor heed the moment's rushing flight,
Nor hear the city's loud garrulity.
The charge and countercharge of wordy fight;
From these strong walls of silence fend me quite,
And I am left, in peace, to contemplate,
Alone and open to the nameless Light,
With all my depths of soul irradiate,
While speech must fail, and even formless thought,
And blind-eyed instinct (stirring in the clay),
And sturdy reason, all be counted naught,
All cast aside for this diviner way —
The hidden, psychic power awaken, thrill,
Vibrate, responsive to the Outer Will.

CONQUERING KINGS

Like Conquering Kings we face our fate,
Who hurtle forth to meet it;
Our hopes are high, our hearts are great,
Panoplied, strong, we greet it.

But Conquering Kings lament their loss
When the great fight is foughten,
For bear they crescent, or bear they cross,
Each day is dearly boughten.

So Conquering Kings, with hardened hearts,
Must write in blood their story,
And, passing on in purple pomp,
Erect on graves their glory.

ARIZONA

Stretched out from both my hands
Lie the parched, arid lands,
Thirsty and dry and bare,
Fanned by a furnace air;
Serrate against hard skies
Their mistless mountains rise,
Or, in the distance seen,
Glow with an opal sheen,
Violet, and blue, and rose,
Their gorgeous color flows,
Or ochre, orange, chrome,
Against a turquoise dome;
While the heat haze between
Vibrates, a hueless screen;
The sand around my feet
Glares in the sun's fierce heat.
Drifted and driven apace
It knows no resting place;
Despite the awful drought
Weird cacti writhe about,
And Spanish dagger sheaves
Spread out their fleshy leaves —
But here the faint heart clings
To any hope of springs —
Ah! here may vain ears strain
For blessed, dripping rain —
And here may burned eyes glare
On many a mirage fair: —
Far from all human reach
Lost bones may bare and bleach —
Stretched out from both my hands
Lie the parched, arid lands.

A FOREST FIRE

Aloft against the sky
  Expectant tongues of flame, —
The pointed pines stand high
Aloft against the sky,
Where men and women die
  With cries on God's Great Name —
Aloft against the sky
  Expectant tongues of flame.

LOST ATLANTIS

The blind snake crawls along the walls
  Of tower and turret ages buried;
The ground swell laps within the gaps
  Of the long rampart rough and serried.

There clings white brine upon the shrine
  Within the temple's wave-worn glory,
And white things creep in slime, and sleep
  Upon the tablet's graven story.

Soft silence reigns in those domains
  Where once the trumpet rang so loudly;
And pallid gleams of phosphor beams
  Glow where the sun once glittered proudly.

Oh! love, they lie beneath no sky,
  Who fell by field and hill and river —
The wild seas roll from pole to pole,
  And surfs above them boom forever.

A BALLADE OF DEAD FASHIONS

Where are the gowns we used to wear,
  The Watteau gowns that once were grace?
Where the tortured and heaped up hair,
  Where our Grandmothers' iron stays?
Where is the drooping Spanish lace,
  The paletot we held so dear?
Where the wimple that hid the face?
  Where are the fashions of Yester Year?

Where is the collar's Medici flare,
  Sandals that once held honored place?
That tiny cheek patch (fetching snare!),
  The velvet habit that led the chase?
Where is the dangling mirror case,
  And where the scanty gown "Empire,"
The jewelled slipper, for courtly pace,
  Where are the fashions of Yester Year?

Where is the powder we could not spare,
  The classic dress of the Grecian race?
The beauty masked from vulgar stare,
  The vine-clad nymph upon that vase?
The full-blown hoops for Regal space,
  The fads and fancies, now so queer,
The bygone beauty, the cherished craze,
  Where are the fashions of Yester Year?

ENVOY

Sweetheart! This Ballade in your praise!
  Why should you ask, why should I hear,
When you are lovely all your days,
  Where are the fashions of Yester Year?

A LITTLE LOVE SONG

The breakers on the beach
  Roll in, and roll anew,
So my thoughts, all and each,
  Set constantly to you.

Across your wind-swept sky
  The moon rides fair and calm;
So in this world am I
  Without a fear or qualm.

The ocean and the moon
  Still act and counteract;
Thy life returneth soon
  To mine, to keep our pact.

THE PRAYING PINES

Rooted they stand, but yet like pilgrim bands
That Heavenward raise their hands,
  And, praying, climb a rocky mountain road,
So climb the pines up from the lower lands.

Tongueless? for those who hear upon the way,
Oh! with what zeal they pray!
  Their voice a sweet, insistent, suppliant sigh,
As soft as zephyr's sound on summer's day.

THE QUEST OF THE NEW WORLD

There is a world, reserved beyond our keenest gaze,
Ringed by a barking surf, and hid by dashing sprays,
Cut off from us by many wandering ocean ways;

And some return, saying they surely find it not,
And some dare not go forth from home and garden plot,
And some come not again, and swiftly are forgot;

But some have gone, and come again, by God's good grace,
Standing to cry their news in the full market place,
Urging their fellow-men, with joyous tongue and face;

Yea! these have pleaded long and bravely, eager eyed,
But child, and wife, and friend said that they wholly lied, —
To hide their broken hearts they crept away and died;

Oh! deep and deep the calm, beyond the breakers' din, —
Yes, fair that world to those who care, and dare, to win,
All life is very sweet to those who enter in.

THE SMALL HOURS.

The wee small hours of blindfold night,
Before the darkness gropes to light,
  Are hours most ill to lie awake.
  Then will remorseless Conscience slake
His wrath, his vengeance, and his spite,
Tormenting every sleepless wight,
  And into endless ages make
    The wee small hours;

Then Memories' ghosts arise upright;
Then strong, throat-gripping fears affright;
  Brave hearts long broke once more will break,
  Old sorrow new life-lease will take, —
And these condemn us to this plight,
    The wee small hours.

WE DO NOT KNOW

We do not know, we may not guess
      What we shall be
When we have doffed this human dress:
We do not know, we may not guess:
We know that here are strain and stress.
      Time past, thro' all eternity
We do not know, we may not guess
      What we shall be.

MORNING, NOON, AND NIGHT

Arise, my soul, and praise thy Lord
  At dawning of the day;
Before thou frame a paltry word
  Arise my soul and praise thy Lord,
Thy will and His in sweet accord,
  Prepare thy heart to pray;
Arise my soul and praise thy Lord
  At dawning of the day.

Approach, my soul, and praise thy Lord;
  Tho' babel ring thee 'round,
Seek thou the aid thou hast implored,
  Approach, my soul, and praise thy Lord;
Assailed by roar and huge discord,
  The city's noonday sound,
Approach, my soul, and praise thy Lord,
  Though babel ring thee 'round.

Awake, my soul, and praise thy Lord,
  Though night blindfold thine eyes;
To worship Whom the Saints adored,
  Awake, my soul, and praise thy Lord,
Delay thou not for deeds deplored,
  Advance thy great emprise:
Awake, my soul, and praise thy Lord,
  Though night blindfold thine eyes.

THE WORLD FORGETTING

Oh, Dearest, let us laugh, and set the world at naught —
Its hopes, its fears, its very triumphs all forgot —
The while we sip this bowl of nectar we have caught.

What is this world, that bids us each to sacrifice,
At its command, our new and perfect Love emprise?
I think that you and I this sham world may despise!

Oh, Dearest, let us sit, with hand in hand, and bide
That hour the sea of Fate will send its mounting tide,
To bear our boat of Love to the new World untried.

THE WYVVERN ON THE GATE POST

Long, lank, and lean, upon the post upreared,
His neck a scrawn, his eagle head spike-eared,
His iron beak a thing to be most feared.

His scaly tail, in wrath around him coiled,
And angry eye betrayed him late embroiled.
Beneath his claw a serpent lay despoiled.

So for a thousand years he sate erected;
So held, a thousand years, his foe subjected,
And kept, a thousand years, his honor unsuspected.

AN HAWAIIAN AFTERNOON

The sun upon the rocks,
And the breakers on the bar;
And a line of tossing shadows
Where the royal palm trees are;

The brilliant, cloud-filled heav'n,
The strong voiced wind roaring by,
And the blazing red hibiscus,
And a lazy, deep "lanai";

A soft, liquid sound of singing,
As the day draws nigh to night,
While the purple darkness deepens —
All these things are my delight.

THE SQUINT

Peephole to Heaven! whereby those lepers gained
Sight of the Host, sound of the tinkling bell,
Waft of the incense rising to the Lord —
Those, grievous smitten of the Lord, gained these!
Those lepers, whiter than the driven snow,
Men lonelier than the blind, or mowing mute,
Crouching without the Church's walls, might peer
In through this narrow slot, and hear the Mass
Said for their sin-scarr'd souls, and so might have
Souls, like their leprous bodies, white as snow.
They might hope nothing for this world, who cried
"Unclean! Unclean!" and dwelt among the rocks;
But for the world to come their hope was high;
Christ had himself healed lepers in His life:
Perchance, in this life Purgatory passed,
They would, on death, win straight to Heav'n above.
But oh! to be a morbid, morbose *thing;*
To be, each man, his own live, loathsome tomb;
To walk this earth and think what might have been;
To see a wife, held by another man,
Dear babes run, shrieking, from all near approach.
An outcast, outlaw — outrage to the eyes!
This wedge-shaped cleft their only joy in life,
Or means whereby they gained a hope of Heav'n —
Lo! here they stood, here, on this hallowed ground
And laid their heads against these sacred stones
To weep, and curse the day that they were born.

We now stand here, clean, in the light of day,
With smooth, whole skins, and pity their past woe;
Who, in the years they writhed beneath the curse,
Who pitied, succored, shielded them? Alas!
The Church's walls were hard beneath their touch,
Harder the hearts they cried to, long ago.

Lo! here they looked in through the Squint and
saw
The Priest, before the altar of the Lord,
Raising, in spotless hands, the Host on high,
And seeing, crossed themselves, and bowed, and so
They blessed the Lord, and prayed that they might
die.

And now the sod lies smooth above the graves
Of piteous bodies, crumbled into dust.
And soft spring sounds, once dulled to Leper ears,
Melt into music with the Vesper bells.
Perhaps — my hope runs so, is all I say —
Perhaps come through this heaven-like evening air,
Some Souls of Lepers, tongueless in their life,
May chime, and ring, and sing from out the bells,
May choose those bronzed, shining throats to call
Men of a different faith to worship God
There, where they worshiped through the Squint-
slit, long ago!

SINGING

When the waves wash low,
And the great stars go
Over the heaven glistening;
A voice I know
Is singing low,
And I alone am listening.

When the waves dash high
And the foam blows by,
Sweetest of memories bringing,
A presence dear
Is very near,
A voice of love is singing.

THE SATYRS

Hear the satyrs calling, crying,
As the windy day is dying
O'er the rocks;
And the shepherd speeds the flocks
They're eyeing!

See the satyrs leap and scramble
Thro' the briar and brake and bramble;
In the glow
Of the red sun sunken low
They gambol,

Never thinking of the morrow,
Without head or heart to borrow
Any care.
Of all sadness, of all sorrow
Unaware.

MELANCHOLIA

To Albrecht Dürer, who could paint a soul
On one small page in staring black and white,
This Chant Royal so full of dree and dole,
The study of a Soul, I do indite.

A world of willful woe lay in his gloomy glance,
The lowering look of one who longed and sought to brood,
To daze himself into a miserable trance,
Each stalwart limb relaxed in lassitude,
Volition clean destroyed, he sat all motionless;
He nothing would deny, in nothing acquiesce;
It seemed his soul had left an empty tenement,
So still he sat him there, wholly improvident,
With all the heart-stirred world an equal-born coheir;
From peace and strife alike he was too abstinent,
He never girt himself to wrestle with Despair.

Filled with a self-distrust, too dire for utterance,
He idly held this life a jarring interlude,
The Universe a symphony of dissonance
Performed unto a reckless, wretched, worthless multitude
Of those who filled their ears with voice of drunkenness,
With foolish clatter or with more insane excess;
And for himself he ever paid but scant attent,
Doubting the least of thought he gave this theme misspent,
So bode he dumbly deaf, and with unheeding stare,
No strain might rouse him to be bold and confident,
He never girt himself to wrestle with Despair.

He wot of neither fact nor yet of sweet romance;
In many peopled towns he dwelled in solitude;

Bedazed himself with strange, intemperate temperance,
Would every form of human joy exclude.
The most he ever craved was blank forgetfulness,
The power to nullify his soul's sentient duress,
To plunge in nothingness this vital incident;
The Cup of Death he owned his only Sacrament,
He loathed to linger here, believed in no elsewhere;
With all his mighty strength was not bellipotent,
He never girt himself to wrestle with Despair.

The struggle for this life, man's fierce inheritance,
He only recognized the better to elude;
Of hope and fear alike he dwelled in ignorance,
Of keen ambition and of dullard servitude,
Of loss, of sorrow, parting, and rare happiness,
The profit of the right, the pains of who transgress,
The joy of joys, great love (of bliss and torture blent),
Untouched he bode, and equally incompetent,
As one who cared to win in human life no share,
He dallied with weird woes; to his vast detriment
He never girt himself to wrestle with Despair.

So sank he low in depths of bitter arrogance,
A giant shirking fight, in hard similitude,
A cowering soul that shrank from using vigilance,
That every duty, right, and privilege eschewed,
While boasting, blatant, of its languid helplessness,
Betrayed, alas! long years of living spiritless,
Each word, each look, each cynic silence eloquent
Of unused buckler, rusting sword, and bow unbent;
Proudly ashamed he would not rise and dare,
Content with discontent he lived indifferent,
He never girt himself to wrestle with Despair.

Throughout his life a melancholy malcontent,
Assailed by interned foes who were most violent,
  Assaulted by those foes who made himself their lair
He saw his life destroyed and he could but lament,
  He never girt himself to wrestle with Despair.

THE REAR GUARD

Immortal glories met the martyr's upturned eye,
Crowned row on row all heaven leaned to see him die,
And courier angels led the victor soul on high:

But, in our later age, we, spent and well-nigh blind,
See naught above and the fierce foe approach behind,
And turn to the defense resolved and firm of mind.

LONGING

Oh! also I in Arcady
  Was born one summer day.
Oh! ever I to Arcady
  Would turn each budding May.

In Arcady the woods are deep
  Wild creatures cry or call;
While wakened from their winter sleep
  The waters flow and fall.

All brakes are rising 'round the ponds,
  The violets bloom and blow;
Brown buds unroll to ferny fronds,
  To freshly green, and grow.

Oh! often I in Arcady
  Have seen the summer wane;
But never I in Arcady
  Will watch the spring again!

THE SPIRIT MOVES

Row upon row of faces purged from thought,
  Eye after eye glazed in a sightless stare;
Man after man to highest tension wrought,
  Oblivious of all worldly coil or care;
Not knowing "how," nor recking aught of "where,"
  These silent sit, and patient, side by side,
These waiting, sit, even devoid of prayer,
  Volitionless, with every floodgate wide;
As lifeless pools for stir of quickening tide;
  As desert sands waiting some mighty blast;
As helpless harps that for their master bide;
  As frozen streams which feel the spring at last!
Until one lifts his voice and, proudly quaking,
    proves
  That for all those who crave the potent spirit
    moves.

THE SOUL

Sprung from a past as black as any night,
  And all obscurely down the ages come,
A shrouded figure, feeling for the light,
  A wordless crying, as of one born dumb.

Live in the flesh, entombed we know not where,
  A thing without a shape or any vital part,
A spirit formless as the outer air,
  More near than each man's warmly beating heart.

What is the business that he goes about,
  Can he achieve it in this fleshly tomb,
Can tidings reach him from the world without,
  This prison'd dewdrop hear the great Sea's boom?

* * * *

And when he speaks, as sometimes he has spoken,
  With what alarm his startled listeners hear!
How they reject the sure, veracious token,
  How they refuse him a believing ear!

And when each shatter'd prison is forsaken,
  Where is the spirit? Whither doth he flee?
With what appalling terror others, shaken,
  Cry " He is gone, and sends no word to me! "

Out of the darkness who is seen returning?
  Breaking the silence who hath answer made?
Tho' all the world has stretched out arms of yearning,
  Tho' all the world has wept and been afraid?

What is the spirit dwelling in us mortals?
  From what still spaces moves he to each man?
Why may so few re-enter earthly portals?
  The creature ever question his Creator's plan?

A SEA SONG

The sun, and the moon, and the stars,
  And the tossing waves of the sea,
And the rolling wrack of the storm clouds black,
  They each have a joy for me!

The dark, and the gray, and the light,
  And the buffet of untamed wind,
And the breaking gleam of the waves abeam,
  Are sweet to the girded mind.

The hush, and the calm, and the gale,
  And the lightning's vicious dart,
And the hissing play of the prow-cut spray,
  Are song to the sea-bred heart.

FALLEN IDOLS

This way and that upon the great High Place,
  Where once they stood in flower-wreathed holiness,
The gods lie fallen on their flank or face;
  Unplagued by prayer or passionate address
  Of votary or any votaress,
No longer troubled by the horrid wail
  Of priests beseeching them to bann or bless,
With night-long service till the stars were pale,
Heart-shaking drums no more their ears assail.

Fallen, but on a mountain top, they seem
  To turn possessive eyes across the vale,
Protecting still, where once they reigned supreme;
And here through coming, sunlit centuries
Will haunt old thoughts of these, and gods like these.

IN THE DUSK

Hear the low, slow cooing
Of the wood dove wooing
To his nest!
Hear the soft sweet cooing
Of the little bride he's wooing
On his breast.

Hear the fierce, fast pleading
Of the wounded heart that's bleeding
At your feet;
Hear the thick, sick bleeding
Of the dying heart that's pleading
To you, sweet!

Stretch your arms, oh, make them cover
For your fainting, fasting lover
Come to you.
Raise your mouth all honey dripping,
Let your lover lie a-sipping
Of its dew.

IF

If these long hours would turn again,
And I might be beside you,
I would not do as I did then,
Reproach, nor check, nor chide you!

If those lost days might dawn again,
For sadly do I miss you,
I would not do as I did then,
But lift my mouth, and kiss you.

THE WOODLAND THULE

Who can give me news most truly
Of that dim and woodland Thule?
With the hillside echoes trilling
The sad whippoorwill's long shrilling —
Paint in words the sunset's paling,
After-glowings fading, failing
Who shall watch the darkness coming,
In his ears the silence drumming,
Vigilant, see shadows creeping
Round the outpost he is keeping;
Startled, hear the treetops stirring,
Hear the night hawk's wide wings whirring?
See the swift stars falling, shooting,
Shiver at the owl's long hooting,
Watch, alone, a half moon drifting
Through the cloud reefs, changing, shifting,
Who, oh, who can bring me newly
Word of that dusk, dripping Thule?

SIMÆTHA

Was ever any woman more than I
Brimmed with the potent, fiery wine of Love,
Bounden to raise her heart, a full-filled cup,
And wish and crave the drinking of that draught?
Here, where the night, with scented, slow-drawn
breath,
Speaks wordless tales of love in ages gone,
Let me await my thirsty parchéd love,
And tell myself of his great need to drink.
What should I do but slake those burning lips?
How shield myself against that begging mouth?
And yet I dread the velvet sound of feet
Coming on the inexorable road,
Hasting, in triumph, jubilant, to me;
And yet I tremble bitterly with cold,
And quake at heart with an in-striking fear;
Why should the night so seem to pause and wait,
Leaning above me, vigilant with eyes?
Are not *his* eyes enough to see me yield?
The dusk seems full of shadowy, watching gods,
Whom I resent; let *him* be Zeus to me!
I have no wish for jealous hierarchies
Who strive to rob him of his single dues;
In all the man-filled, teeming land of Greece,
And all the heaven crowded with fair gods,
There is none other godlier than he;
How have I been heart-clean and free from all,
How walked alone, not heeding other men!
They were not he, they could not ape his grace,
Assume that princely, self-contented air
Of him who makes, and keeps, alike his laws,
Bidding and binding his obedient soul,
Prescribing virtues fittest for a god;
He is the man to whom I gave my life,
His the sole power to shatter or to shield;

Therefore I tremble greatly for myself,
Acute with premonitions of that hour,
When he shall come with forward bending head,
His mouth a claimant undeniable.

COWARDICE

I sit beside my laughing love
  And tease my glances with her hair;
I'd sever one small treasure trove —
    If I but dare!

I sit beside my weeping love
  And view her sorrow with despair,
The best consoler I could prove —
    If I but dare!

I sit beside my heedless love
  And pour my passion on the air,
I would her lovelessness reprove —
    If I but dare!

A WHISPERED LOVE SONG

HE:

" Lay both thy little, trembling hands in mine,
" While I lay hungry, thirsty lips to thine; —
" Yea, this rare, thrilling thing is Love Divine!

" Rest, dear, thy pulsing, quaking breast on me;
" Oh! dare look up into my eyes and see
" The fierce, sweet, tender love I feel for thee.

" Oh! this bright trance, this dream, this heaven of fire!
" This brave new world to which I may aspire!
" This life new quickened with my heart's desire! "

SHE:

" This is the haven where I fain would be,
" Yea, this the refuge from life's angry sea;
" My safety, solace, hope, all lie with thee."

THE DANCING FAUN

A little open moonlit glade,
Girt round about by bosky shade,
The arching heaven star-inlaid;

The night-wind, breathing of perfume,
Blew softly through this forest room;
A firefly glinted in the gloom;

The soft, insistent, cooing dove
Had lulled to sleep his mated love,
While silence brooded far above;

A ferny scent, a rustling sound,
The wild faun entered at a bound,
Paused, cast swift glances all around;

Here, in this little, lonely glade
His wooden pipe he nightly played,
Here might disport him undismayed —

With lithesome spring, or lissome bend,
He danced the glade from end to end,
His shadow dancing like a friend;

With twirl and swirl and sweeping, too,
His round limbs glistening in the dew,
His circling step he inward drew,

And in the center of the glade
He slowly did salute his shade,
And tossed and caught the pipe he'd played;

Then raised his voice and reveled long
In husky, throaty, guttural song,
In sounds that scarce to man belong;

And at the end a loud "halloo!"
Out from his trumpet hands he threw,
Then vanished, gamboling, from my view.

LOVE-LIES-BLEEDING

Unkissed, unkind, I leave you in the fatal room
  Where once I hoped a brighter day should glow;
Unpitied, wept, or loved I face my doom,
  Your only prayer is that I "quickly go" —
Ah, well! one dreamer more is rudely waked,
  His pictured future blurred by a soft hand;
One more poor fool his trusting heart had staked
  To win his Eden in this callous land! —
One more poor fool his trusting heart has lost —
  He found the game too skilled for him to play,
And now in midnight darkness counts the cost
  With bitter tears, and dreads the coming day —
And you will never think upon the place
Where Love-lies-Bleeding for your lovely face.

THE QUEEN OF THE WASTE LANDS

" Thus of Arthur I find never more written in books . . . but thus was he led away in a ship wherein were three queens: the one was King Arthur's sister, queen Morgan le Fay; the other was the queen of Northgalis; the third was the queen of the Waste Lands." — *Morte D'Arthur.*

On either side the riven rocks, boulders and dornicks lay,
While loos'ning peak and leaning pine trembled across the way,
And every little rift and rent gaped in the scorching day.

Blood-red, gold-yellow, dazzling white, the rocks before mine eyes,
Blue over head, and deeper blue, the caverns of the skies,
And steep I saw, before my feet, the climbing pathway rise.

No trace nor track of beast or man; an eagle's scream afar,
I heard resound, repeat, rebound, from cleaving cliff and scaur —
Alone, and lonely at the heart, I sought my one Lode Star.

A sudden wall before my face rose glassy, silvered, steep,
A fissure opened at my side fell many fathoms deep,
Along that hideous precipice my span-wide path did creep.

Around this rock, I caught my breath, and fell with folded hands,
Such glare of glory smiting him no mortal man withstands,
There stood, beside a turquoise tarn, the queen of the Waste Lands.

THE WINDOW

Facing the sunset, waiting for the night,
  Filled with the pity of the dying day;
Tho' fair first stars are strengthening their light
  The shadows deepen to an amber gray.

Filled with the pity of the dying day,
  Whose crimson passion burns the western sky,
Yet looking, longing for the silver ray,
  Yet longing for the pure-faced moon on high.

Though fair first stars are strengthening their light,
  The day dies hard upon his cloudy bed.
Tho' silver radiance shimmer thro' the night,
  The west is pulsing with a living red.

The shadows deepen to an ember gray,
  The chill wind rises with a wailing note;
The beauty of the night succeeds the day,
  But sobs, I know not wherefore, bind my throat.

THE GARGOYLE

The gaping gargoyle leaned from out the leads,
A break-neck height above the people's heads
  That in the market hurried to and fro.
His straining feet pressed back against the stones,
His ears assaulted by the jarring tones
  Of bells that swung and clamored close below.

Astretch he was, an eager, craning beast,
And yet he bode afar from people and from priest,
  Saint Simon, pillared, was not more alone;
Beyond, the nave its mighty roof-beams reared,
There, round about, in guardian wise appeared
  A-many Saints in a thick peopled zone.

But the scrawn gargoyle dwelled remote from these,
Facing forever north to blizzard or to breeze;
  Wizened, grotesque, the craftsman fashioned him;
So that same craftsman, in that age of strife,
Perchance fought out alone, hard pressed, his artist life,
  Staunch amid rabid wars, and doctrines very grim.

A TRUMPET CALL

Awake! be men, and fight this desperate last fight!
Arm ye and forth at once, nor wait for greater light;
Ye are not fools and weak, confusing wrong and right.

Arise! look forth and see the joined battle lie. —
A mortal struggle strain, beneath the quailing eye,
With peril stretching far, and danger very nigh.

Awake! Arise! Advance! Behold, the dawn doth break,
If you must die today, your thirst for honor slake,
And in the fierce forefront of war your ending make.

THE PASSION FLOWER

Blown in a day and eager for the Night,
Her fragile petals shiver in the light,
Her tiny tendrils cling, as even fingers might.

Wide to the day, her burning blossom, bright
In the sun, yet yearning for the Night.
Lo! in her heart the cross is borne upright.

* * * *

So with the burning passion I requite
Only with glances, as a sister might,
Behold! upon its path the Cross looms in our sight.

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